

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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STADIS/////////
FOR AMBASSADOR SAXBE FROM DUBS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, PFOR, IN

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH KEWAL SINGH

REF: NEW DELHI 13569 AND 13678

1. WE MUCH APPRECIATE RECEIVING YOUR MESSAGE REGARDING KEWAL SINGH. WE FULLY AGREE THAT HIS COMING OFFERS A WELCOME OPPORTUNITY FOR MORE EFFECTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE INDIAN EMBASSY HERE IN WASHINGTON AND WE INTEND TO DO ALL WE CAN TO GET HIM OFF TO A GOOD START. REST ASSURED THAT ROY AND I WILL DO ALL WE CAN TO BE HELPFUL. PHIL HABIB IS SCHEDULED TO RETURN FROM NEW YORK OCTOBER 8 AND WILL BE HAPPY TO MEET WITH KEWAL SINGH SHORTLY AFTER HE ARRIVES, ASSUMING HE DECIDES TO STICK TO EARLY OCTOBER ETA.

2. THE QUESTION OF PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS IS A MUCH TRICKIER PROBLEM AND I AM FRANKLY NOT SURE HOW BEST TO
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ADVISE KEWAL SINGH. I HAVE DISCUSSED THIS WITH DAVE

SCHNEIDER AND WE CONCLUDE THAT THE BEST APPROACH IS PERHAPS TO LAY OUT THE FACTS FOR KEWAL SINGH SO HE CAN DECIDE FOR HIMSELF.

3. THE NORMAL PRACTICE ON PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS IS

TO WAIT UNTIL 3 OR 4 AMBASSADORS HAVE ARRIVED AND THEN SCHEDULE A SESSION WITH THE PRESIDENT. HE MEETS WITH EACH INDIVIDUALLY TO RECEIVE THEIR CREDENTIALS AND EXCHANGE GREETINGS IN SESSIONS THAT ARE SCHEDULED TO LAST FIVE MINUTES. HOWEVER, IN THIS ELECTION YEAR, NORMAL PRACTICE IS NOT NORMAL AND THAT IS THE SITUATION THAT NOW EXISTS. AT PRESENT THERE ARE EIGHT REPEAT EIGHT AMBASSADORS WHO HAVE ARRIVED HERE AND ARE WAITING TO PRESENT CREDENTIALS. ANOTHER TWO OR THREE ARE EXPECTED IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF WEEKS SO THAT KEWAL SINGH IS LIKELY TO BE NO. 11 OR 12 ON THE LIST. THE PLACE IN LINE FOR A CREDENTIALS' CEREMONY IS STRICTLY ACCORDING TO THE DATE AN AMBASSADOR ARRIVES AND WE CANNOT JUMP KEWAL SINGH AHEAD OF ANY OF THE OTHERS WHO GET HERE BEFORE HE DOES. THERE IS A PROPOSAL THAT THE PRESIDENT RECEIVE FIVE AMBASSADORS LATER IN SEPTEMBER AND THAT HE RECEIVE ANOTHER GROUP ON OCTOBER 11.

4. IF KEWAL SINGH ARRIVES OCTOBER 7, WE WOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO GET HIM INTO THE SECOND GROUP. THE HITCH IS THAT THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THERE WILL BE ANY LATE SEPTEMBER CEREMONY AND IF THIS SLIPS, HE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO GET INTO THE MID-OCTOBER ONE SHOULD THIS GET SCHEDULED. FRANKLY, GIVEN THE CAMPAIGN PRESSURES, WE ARE TOLD THERE IS NO CERTAINTY WHETHER THE PRESIDENT WILL DECIDE TO MEET WITH THE WAITING AMBASSADORS. IF THE PRESIDENT DECIDES THAT HE CANNOT SPARE THE TIME UNTIL AFTER ELECTION DAY, OUR ASSUMPTION IS THAT THE BACKLOG WILL BE CLEARED UP SHORTLY THEREAFTER, HOWEVER THE ELECTION TURNS OUT.

5. IF KEWAL SINGH ARRIVES OCTOBER 7 BUT IS UNABLE TO PRESENT HIS CREDENTIALS UNTIL AFTER NOVEMBER 2, HE IS ABLE UNDER U.S. GROUND RULES TO FULFILL THE BULK OF HIS FUNCTIONS AS "APPOINTED AMBASSADOR" ONCE HE PRESENTS COPIES
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OF HIS CREDENTIALS DOCUMENT DURING HIS INITIAL CALL ON THE DEPUTY SECRETARY. THIS CAN BE ARRANGED VERY QUICKLY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL.(THIS IS NORMAL PRACTICE AND I POINT THIS OUT BECAUSE THE INDIAN EMBASSY HAS REQUESTED THAT SINGH PRESENT COPIES OF HIS LETTER OF CREDENCE TO THE SECRETARY AS SOON AFTER ARRIVAL AS POSSIBLE.) IN PRACTICE, THIS MEANS THAT KEWAL SINGH CAN TAKE CHARGE OF THE EMBASSY AND CARRY ON OTHER NORMAL AMBASSA-

DORIAL FUNCTIONS BUT SHOULD MAINTAIN A LOW PROFILE.
IN RECENT YEARS IT HAS BECOME COMMON PRACTICE FOR NEW
AMBASSADORS TO COMMENCE THEIR TOUR IN THE "APPOINTED AMBAS-
SADOR" CAPACITY AND YOU CAN ASSURE KEWAL SINGH THAT IN OUR
EYES THIS WOULD IN NO WAY DETRACT FROM HIS ABILITY TO
CARRY ON A MEANINGFUL SUBSTANTIVE DIALOGUE. TIKKI KAUL,
YOU MIGHT MENTION, HAD A FOUR-WEEK WAIT IN 1973.

6. IN SUM, YOU CAN TELL KEWAL SINGH WE WOULD LOOK FORWARD
TO SEEING HIM ON OCTOBER 7, WHILE YOU SHOULD STRESS THAT
WE CAN GIVE NO ASSURANCE HE WILL BE ABLE TO PRESENT
CREDENTIALS BEFORE ELECTIONS. AT THE SAME TIME YOU
SHOULD ASSURE HIM THAT WE ARE READY TO BEGIN MEANINGFUL
SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH HIM AND TO DO EVERYTHING WE
CAN TO ACCORD A WARM AND CORDIAL WELCOME. ROBINSON

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